

NEW YORK
DAILY NEWS

MAR 26 1964

CAPITOL STUFF

By TED LEWIS

Washington, March 25—As the outlines of President Johnson's own foreign policy are hazy and involve a "let us reason together" technique, it should behoove his Senate Democratic leaders to keep their big mouths shut on foreign issues until the Administration's stance is firm and clear.

Instead, they have now deliberately and independently intruded. First, Majority Leader Sen. Mike Mansfield (Mont.) suggested neutralization of South Viet Nam. Today Chairman J. William Fulbright (Ark.) of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee proposed, in effect, that we write off our anti-Castro efforts as failures and accept Red Cuba as here to stay.

It is true that Johnson thinks both Mansfield and Fulbright have "the right" in a free country to say what they think. But is this necessarily so? Foreign capitals consider both Mansfield, as Senate party leader, and Fulbright, as foreign relations chairman, spokesmen of the Administration.

Even here there is a suspicion that when Mansfield talks about the merits of a neutral South Viet Nam, he is floating a trial balloon for the White House to determine sentiment.

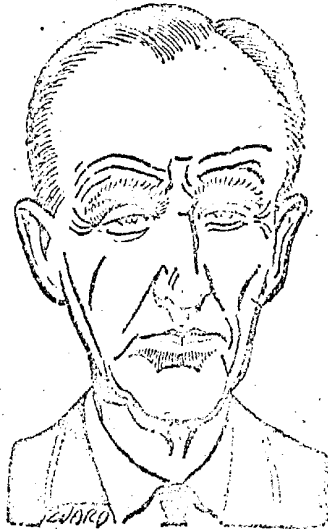
And when Fulbright speaks out for a global "peaceful coexistence" policy which would include Red Cuba, the same reaction is natural, particularly when the White House, as it did today, reported that "thoughtful consideration will be given to his views."

Nevertheless, in both the Mansfield and Fulbright instances, they were voicing their own views. Neither cleared their speeches with the Administration in advance nor asked permission to discuss delicate foreign issues.

Fanning the Flames of the Cuban Issue

And Fulbright clearly thought he was giving the President a hand when he appealed for an end to the semantics argument in the dispute with Panama and knocked down Mansfield's neutrality position on South Viet Nam.

But it is certain that he did the President no favor by making his "realistic" proposal concerning Cuba. Instead, he has fanned the flames of the Cuban policy issue, making it most difficult for Johnson to extricate himself from it in this year's Presidential campaign.



Sen. Mansfield
Voices own views

What Fulbright did in this connection was to spread the suspicion that this Administration is moving toward de facto recognition of Fidel Castro. Certain elements in the Administration have incidentally been "thinking" along this line.

In his speech Fulbright said it was crystal clear to him that the trade boycott of Castro had failed because our Allies wouldn't cooperate. And invasion of Red Cuba was out of the question because it could precipitate a nuclear war.

Therefore, he said, we had better accept the view that the Castro regime "is not likely to be overthrown" and figure out some way to live with Communism remaining only 90 miles from our shores.

Recalling Johnson's Off-the-Cuff Words

This proposal by itself might well have been accepted, even by Republicans, as just a Fulbright exercise in directional finding except for the fact that Johnson had unburdened himself yesterday of certain views.

In an off-the-cuff addition to his speech before building trade union leaders, the President had said the time had come to us "reasoned agreement" to calm down world trouble spots. Well, "reasoned agreement" concerning the Caribbean Red trouble spot would certainly have to be along the lines of Fulbright's proposal.

It is also highly doubtful that Fulbright would have proposed a form of coexistence with Red Cuba if he had believed Johnson himself was not moving that way.

But one thing is sure. Fulbright would not have had the audacity to suggest that Castro was here to stay, if President Kennedy were still alive. Kennedy was committed to get rid of Castro. Johnson is not a prisoner of Kennedy's Cuban policy, although he should be inspired by the idealistic utterances of the late President on that score.

Now times have changed. Now we have the "let us reason together" approach. What did we have on Dec. 29, 1962? That was the day John F. Kennedy appeared before the ransomed Cuban Ba of Pigs invasion brigade in Miami and had this to say:

Cuba . . . "Stretched Out in Chains"

"I want to express my great appreciation to the brigade for making the United States the custodian of this flag. I can assure you that this flag will be returned to this brigade in a free Havana."

"The brigade comes from behind prison walls, but you leave behind you more than six million of your fellow countrymen who are also in a very real sense in prison, for Cuba is today, as Mar (Jose Marti, the original Cuban independence leader) described many years ago, as beautiful as Greece and stretched out in chains—a prison moated by water."

Kennedy then urged the brigade to "work together to keep alive the spirit of the brigade so that some day the people of Cuba will have a free chance to make a free choice." He referred to the brigade as "the point of the spear, the arrow's head" which would make Cuba free.

In the last few months, especially when our Allies were on tap lightly on the wrist for violating the economic blockade, morale of the whole exile movement has been shattered. What Fulbright said today about facing up to realities about Castro simply added to the tragedy for the cause of freedom.